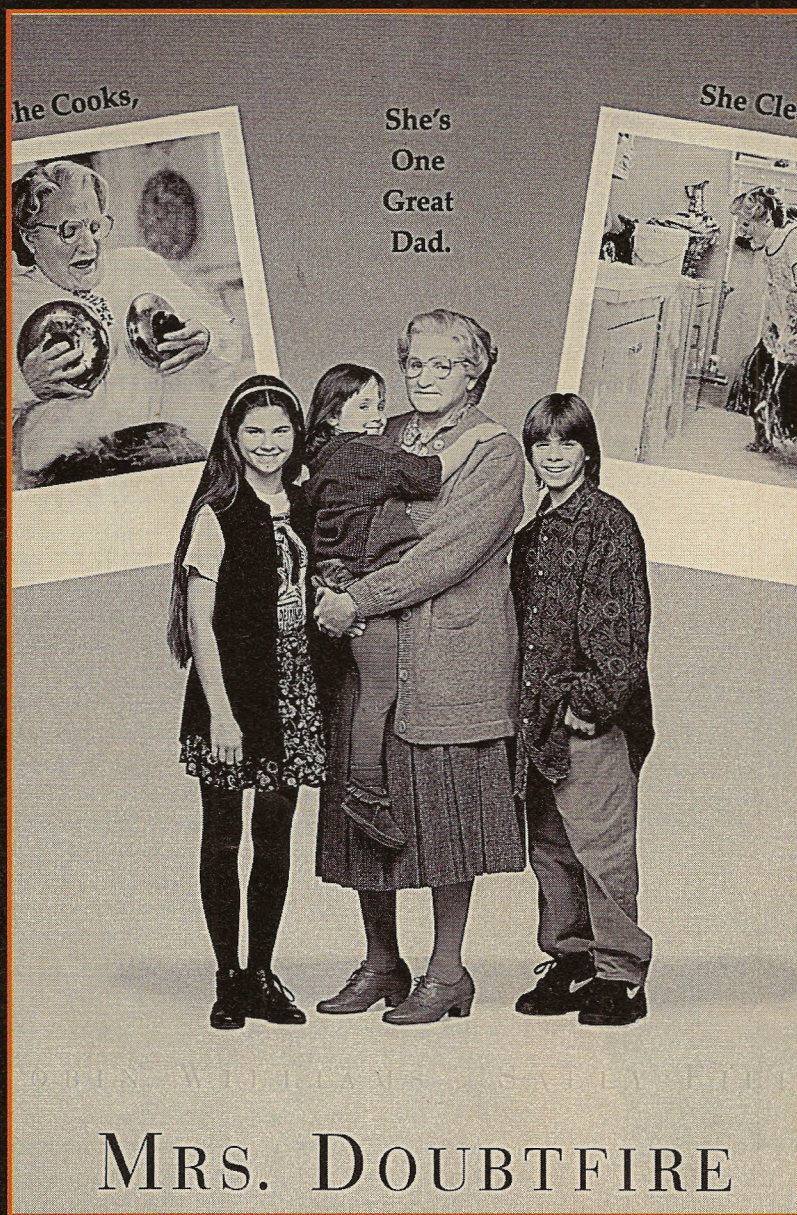


SCREEN SCENE

Video World meanders through the movie world and checks out some future delights in store for you.



MRS DOUBTFIRE

Fresh from his triumph as the anarchic, shape-shifting, many-voiced Genie in Walt Disney's *Aladdin*, Robin Williams looks set for another box-office smash with his cross-dressing comedy *Mrs Doubtfire*. Cheekily, director Chris (Home Alone) Columbus opens with a scene in which struggling actor Williams is seen doing a voice-over for a cartoon; but he is soon sacked for his crazy improvising and we settle down to more serious business. After fourteen years of marriage, Williams and his wife Sally Field, a top interior designer who has finally tired of her husband's childish and irresponsible behaviour, get

a divorce. Field gets custody of the three kids, Williams gets to visit them once a week. Heartbroken, Williams sabotages his wife's ad for a child-minder and, with the help of some substantial padding and a face-mask, courtesy of his sfx-trained brother and gay partner, applies for the position using the name Mrs Doubtfire.

Tailor-made for his improvised humour and sick-making mawkishness, the role allows Williams to indulge himself to the max, combining wild flights of comic imagination with clumsy farce, silly slapstick, sly sexual innuendo and saccharine sentimentality. The preview audience guffawed at every embarrassing moment, screamed with laughter at the quick-change sequences, took wicked delight in the disguised Williams' humiliations of Field's rich, handsome suitor Pierce Brosnan, and sobbed quietly during the tear-jerking scenes between Williams and his estranged kids. The humour is trite and manipulative, the farcical pay-off so obvious it hurts; yet nobody seemed to care and the uproarious laughter continued throughout. To be fair, the ambiguous ending does sug-

gest there may be alternatives to the Mum, Dad and three cute kids scenario, but after two hours of crass stupidity, this single concession to reality rings false.

MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY

Staying with New York, Woody Allen's *Manhattan Murder Mystery* is the closest he's come lately to making what the character in *Stardust Memories* would have called, "one of the early, funny ones." Working again with scriptwriter Marshall Brickman, his writing part-